

TAX REFORM DEPARTMENT.

(This department aims to give everybody's views on taxation (not tariff). Write your opinions, letters, and they will be published or discussed in their turn by the editor or by a member of the Taxation Society. Address: "Taxation Society," this office at P. O. Box 28, Buffalo, N. Y.)

TAXATION IN TORONTO.

Stagnation of Business Called Up the Question. The People Will Vote On It. TORONTO, Can., Dec. 2.—The harmful results of land booms in this and other Canadian cities is calling attention anew to the question of civic taxation and the mode of levying it. At present Toronto is suffering very severely from the collapse of the greatest boom known in Canada since the Winnipeg collapse in 1893. Many workmen have left the city and the population is either stationary or retrograding. While the unfortunate land speculators feel the change very keenly, all other classes are suffering as well. The builders, many of whom have vast houses on their hands, are under pressure, which in many cases proves commercially fatal. The complaints against taxation are strong and are made by all classes. In the hope of restoring the prosperity of the city, exemption from taxation is being offered to outside manufacturers. But this offer has aroused both laboring men and business men of all classes, and they insist that there shall be no discrimination against them. A change in the assessment law of the province will be needed in order to enable the city council to exempt labor products from civic taxation to land values. It is proposed to submit this question to the electors at the election for the city council in January.

"Are you in favor of the legislature granting to municipalities the power to reduce or abolish taxation on all personal property, including merchandise and income as well as machinery, and the power to reduce or abolish taxation on buildings and their improvements?" A majority of the members of the city council are pledged in favor of submitting the question to the people, and Mayor Fleming also supports it. It is thus practically certain that the question will go to the people.

Tap the Trunk of a Tree.

"Who Pays Your Taxes?" is a thoughtful and highly instructive work on the subject indicated. The frontispiece of the book was suggested by an argumentative illustration made in the Troy Press a year or more ago, and the work itself was reviewed in these columns some time since. The Christian Union, however, takes issue with the points so earnestly contended for by this paper and the book in question, of which it says:

"This volume is issued by authority of the Tax Reform association, and contains a number of able essays. The Tax Reform association is composed of men more or less in sympathy with Henry George's proposition to impose all taxes on land values. The work before us demands the repeal of all taxes upon personal property. Its fundamental error is brought out by the picture which serves as its frontispiece. A farmer and his boys are getting the sap from a tree whose trunk is marked 'real estate' and whose branches are marked 'manufactures,' 'business capital,' 'personal property,' 'wages,' etc. The boys are boring at the branches; the old farmer gets his sap from the trunk of the tree. The moral is stated thus: 'When the trunk is tapped, each branch is drawn upon for its due proportion of sap.' This is very clever, but utterly false. The farmers in this country have only one-fourth of the wealth, but they have one-half of the real estate. The tapping of the trunk would take as much sap from their quarter of the wealth as from the three-quarters belonging to the people in the towns."

The Christian Union is greatly in error in saying that the association in question is composed of men favorable to the Henry George theory. Such is not the case. Mr. George would destroy land ownership, a proposition hostile to the views of almost all the members of the tax reform movement. The enforcement of George's notions would revolutionize society as organized, while tax reform would simply wipe out an odious and iniquitous avenue of taxation that it is impossible to enforce and place the burden where it would be less burdensome to society at large, and more equally distributed, than in any other way.

The contention that farmers have one-half the real estate is misleading. They have in area, it is true, but not in value; and real estate is taxed according to its value, not area. The truth is, the farmers have not one-fourth of the real estate of the country in value, and under the system recommended would have to pay less than one-quarter of the taxes. The Christian Union makes a bad break in intimating that an exclusive tax on realty would throw the major share of taxes upon agriculture. It should apologize to its readers.

The frontispiece of an invincible illustration of the principle of diversified taxes, has yet to be refuted. The sagacious maple sugar producer taps the trunk of the tree, from which every branch thereof gathers sustenance. In like manner the sagacious tax system gathers its revenues from realty, upon which every branch of human society depends.

This simple economic truth divests taxation of its confusing perplexities and infernal inequities. The more that the ways of taxing the people are multiplied, the more scandals and stealings at the capitals. The legislators who are so zealous in 'relieving the farmers' are in reality only after fat pickings for themselves. As Cleveland indicated in his message to Congress, the overflowing treasury breeds squanders and thieves.

The Christian Union's orthodoxy has been attacked; but whether or not it be sound on Scripture, its review of the really admirable work named above grossly ignores the great economic question of taxation.—The Troy Press.

NEW YORK STATE has had long experience in instituting a tax system, and should have a fairly just one if any state in the union can. Yet an ex-member of the state board of assessments testifies that fully \$4,000,000 worth of property in the state escapes taxation, of which \$2,500,000,000 is in New York county. Here is a big field for reformers.—National Tribune, Jan. 5.

The question is can this four thousand million be taxed without either driving it away or taxing part of it twice. It is this two thousand five hundred millions that makes the value of New York city's real estate.

Expected Report on Taxation.

The legislative joint committee to make inquiry relative to the subject of taxation is expected to be ready to report at the meeting of the incoming legislature. Its proposed aim is to more equitably distribute the burden of taxation, which can not be done by multiplying the avenues thereof, although this is the policy most likely to be hit upon by shallow and demagogical politicians, more anxious to tickle their constituents than to fathom the true principles of taxation. We hope the members of this committee are exceptionally equipped in this respect, and will demonstrate statesmanship instead of shallowness in their report.

To make a practical advance in the path of reform, the committee must recommend simplicity and straight-forwardness instead of that complexity which will require inquisitorial methods to enforce. The best thing in our judgment, for the committee to do is to advise the abolition of the personal property tax and the concentration of the tax on land values. This is the fairest tax present practicable, and in its ramifications will more equitably and inevitably reach all classes than any other that can be devised. It strikes at the very root of all property, and derives tribute with approximate equality from every branch of wealth.

The committee will be measured by its fruits. The members can not devise any cheap, clapnet methods, which afford now and odious means of gathering the revenues of the state, without bringing themselves into contempt in the eyes of all intelligent students of political economy.

A great principle is involved in taxation. That principle is to give value received in protection to property for the assessments enforced. The form of property that best adapts itself to taxation, and can compel tribute from every variety of wealth, is realty. Land is indispensable. All humanity depends upon its fruitage. Every one who hires a dwelling or place of business helps to pay taxes. There is no escape from it. And with the enforcement of reasonable economics in administration taxes could be concentrated on real estate without increasing its burdens.—Troy (N. Y.) Press.

The Taxation of Farmers.

To the Editors of The Christian Union: In a review of "Who Pays Your Taxes?" in your issue of November 26, you do the Tax Reform association an injustice, and perhaps an injury, which I hope you will be at the pains to correct. You stated that "the association is composed of men more or less in sympathy with Mr. Henry George's proposition to impose all taxes on land values." Such is not the case. As far as I know, not five per cent. of those who support or compose the association have any sympathy at all with Mr. George's proposition.

Further, this being a state association, our illustration, that when the trunk of a tree is tapped each branch is drawn upon for its due proportion of sap, is a good one. The equalized assessed valuation of all real estate in the state of New York for 1893 is \$3,397,234,673, say three thousand four hundred millions. Of this New York city (Kings county) (which latter is practically Brooklyn) have \$1,937,778,678, say two thousand millions, or a good deal more than half.

If you will be at the pains to deduct the assessments of Albany, Buffalo, Troy, Binghamton, Elmira, Utica, Syracuse and other large cities, you will find that New York farmers, who own nearly all the area, own nearly none of the value of real estate.—Secretary New York Tax Reform Association.

We were in error when we judged the views of the Tax Reform association by those of its ablest writers. The association is indorsed by a large number of leading business firms which have no sympathy whatever with Mr. George's views, except his belief that the taxation of personal property should be abandoned. —The Christian Union.

Important for Merchants.

According to the assessment act of Ontario a professional man is taxed on income, a merchant is taxed on capital. Thus if two men, one a professional man the other a merchant, earn equal income, the one has to pay five, six or ten times as much tax as the other. The attention of the legislature has been called to the unequal taxation, but has so far made no rectification. Worse than this, it was enacted at last session of the legislature that all incomes should be exempted to the extent of seven hundred dollars, thus magnifying the inequality between merchants and professional men. Therefore, if a storekeeper and a clerk each earn seven hundred dollars in a year, the latter has no income tax, while the former may be assessed on \$1,000, \$2,000 or \$3,000.

The merchants have just ground for complaint at this inequality. No wonder the small storekeeper has to work long hours for small profits. It was all right to exempt incomes as the legislature did, for incomes should never be taxed; but the legislature should never discriminate. It is quite in order now for the merchants to complain and to ask that they should have relief equivalent to the relief granted in the case of incomes. Let there be something like equality.

A Little Tact.

One of the last important measures of the commonwealth of Massachusetts, before Maine was made a state, was to negotiate with the Penobscot Indians for the purchase of their rights in a large tract of forest land, and some very eminent gentlemen were selected to carry out the bargain. After the signing of the deed with all due formality by the assembled Sagamore at Bangor it was necessary for them to "acknowledge it," as the legal phrase is. One of the stately commissioners held up the paper and asked "if they acknowledged it to be their free act and deed." The result was the red men gathered their blankets around them and relapsed into a state of stoical indifference, giving no sign of reply. Gen. Blake, who was present, had much to do with the Indians, and saw at once they did not understand what the formality required of them meant. "Let me try," he said, taking the paper. Turning to the head chief, he said: "You willing—and all the rest of the Indians willing?" "Ouil ouil!" they all cried in answer, showing as much willingness as they had hitherto of reserve.—Lewiston Journal.

Your personal property has to pay for government. Does it get the benefit?

What did you get for your last year's taxes?

THE FARMING WORLD.

IMPROVED HIGHWAYS.

A Missouriian's Suggestions Concerning Durable Roads. Some years since I was sitting with Lieut. Gov. Claycomb in the senate chamber. He remarked to me that the senate was in the committee of the whole on the road question and that the man that could solve satisfactorily these two questions would be entitled to the gratitude of the people. I remarked: "Governor, I have solved the road question in the only way it can be solved under present conditions." He asked: "How?" I said: "After harvest I put eight mules to a road machine, and, without regard to road tax, throw up the road in the center. The oversexed furnishes the tiling and another neighbor puts them across all low places. I would supplement this by levying a small tax to procure stone from the work of penitentiary convicts, to macadamize all low and spout places, having previously tiled them. This is as far as we can go at present."

But I now desire to present the question in a more extended shape. It is said that an old farmer once told his son "never to go into debt except for fertilizers." I would make another exception—to procure good roads. The plan proposed would require a constitutional amendment. I would have each township organize into a municipality for road purposes. Then when two-thirds of the taxpaying citizens of a township should vote to tax themselves for road purposes, the state should furnish an equal amount, not to exceed in the aggregate 5 per cent. on the assessed value of the taxable property of the township. Let the state issue its bonds at 3 per cent. to cover one-half of the indebtedness and loan its credit for the township half of indebtedness, limiting the aggregate indebtedness to \$30,000,000. A state tax of not exceeding one-fifth of 1 per cent. and a like tax on township property would soon liquidate the bonds.

I have made careful inquiry as to the cost of rock and gravel, and find that the cost will not exceed \$2,000 per mile. Let us illustrate: Say the taxable assessed value of a township property is \$1,000,000. An indebtedness of \$50,000 can be created, of which the state pays \$25,000 and the township \$25,000. This will build 25 miles of road.

As to the justice and equity of this proposition, it will be remembered that the bulk of the recent indebtedness of the state, now so nearly liquidated, was contracted by loaning the credit of the state for building railroads; that the lien was subsequently released, and the whole state, including all the portions not immediately benefited by the railroads has uncompensatingly aided in liquidating the debt.

Can anyone doubt but that with such a system of roads the taxable wealth would in 20 years double in value?—D. Shackelford, in St. Louis Republic.

SOOT FOR PLANTS.

One of the Most Valuable Fertilizers Known to Science. There are few chemical manures which are so valuable as soot, and it is easily procured from chimneys with a long handled brush. It is best used in liquid form, and for this purpose can be prepared as follows: Place a pound of soot in a square bit of rough sack and tie it up securely with a string, just allowing the soot to be moved about inside the canvas. This bag should be dipped into a large pan of rain water and allowed to soak for twenty-four hours. The black water surrounding the bag is then ready for use, but will require diluting if at all thick. More water can be added as used and the bag pressed with a stick, as necessary, until the soot is gone. A writer in Farm and Home says that soot water is the best fertilizer for pot plants, as it does not make the soil foul, and also destroys the worms and insects, but it must not be used too thick or the surface soil may become too hard and dry. Moderate applications once or twice a week for plants in full growth will be found most beneficial to them. Pure soot may be mixed with twice its bulk of water and used as a top dressing; it is not safe to use it alone, as it may injure the plant, being extremely strong, but when mixed it will prove of great benefit to all garden crops.—Green's Fruit Grower.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES.

If the asparagus bed has not been burnt over it should be done as soon as the weather will permit, and the bed should be covered thickly with manure. In sorting over the onions save the soft ones and plant them in cold frames with plenty of horse manure. They will sell as well as radishes after growing a short time.

The roaming of stock among fruit trees is more detrimental at this season than at any other. Eager for every green thing, they are sure to eat small branches and sometimes gnaw large ones. If setting plum trees remember that many varieties of the Chickasaw family, including the Wild Goose, have imperfect blossoms and need to be set among other plums that they may be fertilized sufficiently to produce well.

The plant selected for a garden can be sown now as well as at any other time. Cover the entire surface with fine manure (not litter), and let it remain for the frost to pulverize and the rains to dissolve. If the plant was plowed last fall the seed of the manure will be more marked when the crops are seeded down.

The Cause of Blue Milk.

Blue milk comes from an unhealthy and badly kept cow. Occasionally the fault may come from the organism of the cow, but that is not usual.

THE TOWN OF ICICLE, in Washington, has been renamed Leavenworth. A PERSONAL in a Boston paper reads: "Mr. Howland, who had his face slapped at the horse show in New York the other night, is at the Vendome." Here is the "college yell" of the Central university, Kentucky: "Brackety, Kax, Kowax, Kowax, Brackety, Kax, Kowax, Kowax, Wo-oop, Wo-oop; Hullahaloo—C. U., C. U."

A BOSTON schoolboy, who evidently has a bright future awaiting him, lately began an essay with these words: "The world was formerly inhabited by immortals, but they are now all dead." Some of the residents of a new town in Oklahoma desired to name it Tipperary; others wanted to call it Jerusalem. After a heated discussion, they came to a compromise, and the town is known as Tipperusalem.

FOUND IN PRINT.

USE a small, soft sponge to apply the blacking to shoes.

TANNIN mixed with mutton tallow is good for chapped hands.

Put a teaspoonful of salt into a kerosene lamp once in awhile.

A GOOD-SIZED sponge is nice for cleaning paint and washing windows.

A PASTE made of equal parts of lard and powdered chalk will cure corns.

A LAMEN soft sponge, either dry or slightly dampened, makes a good duster.

THROW a quantity of salt in the stove if the chimney is on fire and there is danger from sparks; if not, let it burn.

NITRE is excellent for a cold, especially a feverish one. Use ten drops to a teaspoonful, according to age, once in four hours.

THE Direct Washington Route for the Inauguration. The Ohio & Mississippi and Baltimore & Ohio systems of railways running directly east from St. Louis form the short and direct line to the National Capital, and offer through train service which is not equalled by any other route. It is properly speaking the only line from the Mississippi River to Washington.

FOR the Inauguration of President Cleveland, March 4th, Excursion Rates will be made by the K. C. & St. Louis and also by Western Lines via St. Louis and the O. & M. and B. & O. systems.

Agents for tickets and baggage on agents of connecting lines west, at address: GEO. B. WARREN, Gen'l West. Pass. Agt. O. & M. R'y, St. Louis, Mo.

"WANTED, a young woman who can cook and dress the children." Poor little dears! —Gazette de Lausanne.

Among the Wide Range of Benefits Conferred upon the invalid public by Hostetter's Stomach Bitters, its good effects in curing the most distressing and dangerous ailments are conspicuous and amply proven. An imperfect discharge of the bowels is the precursor of the preliminary, if disregarded, of their dangerous disease. The Bitters will forestall this and avert all danger. It is a simple remedy, and gives prompt relief. 25 cents a box.

Do as you please, and in the end you'll find yourself displeased with what you have done.—Truth.

BRECHMAN'S PILLS have been in popular use in Europe for 50 years, and are a safe, sure and gentle remedy. 35 cents a box.

What is done cannot be undone, especially if it is a hard-boiled egg.—Texas Sittings.

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Royal Baking Powder is shown a pure cream-of-tartar powder, the highest of all in leavening strength.—U. S. Government Food Report.

Royal Baking Powder is superior in purity, strength, and wholesomeness to any other powder which I have examined.—New York State Analyst.

A man in a down-town restaurant ordered more wine than he needed the other day, and by the time he had got to the roasts he was volubly and fiercely describing to a friend how he gave a man a beating for looking at him in a restaurant. As soon as he had finished he began again and told the story six times, each time in a louder voice. The fun of the thing was that, although he was telling what dire vengeance he would execute on any man who looked at him without permission, his uproarious remarks made him the center of general observation and the cause of smiles and laughter, of which he was, fortunately, oblivious.

THE man or woman who is profitably employed is generally happy. If you are not happy it may be because you have not found your proper work. We earnestly urge all such persons to write to B. F. Johnson & Co., Richmond, Va., and they can show you a work in which you can be happy and profitably employed.

DOROTHY (aged three, to her older sister)—"I'm as tall as you." Marjorie—"No, you are not. Stand up and see. There! you only come up to my mouth." Dorothy—"Well, I don't care! I'm as tall the other way—my feet go down as far as yours."

DISEASE is unnatural, and is but the proof that we are abusing Nature. It is claimed that Garfield Tea, a simple herb remedy, helps Nature to overcome this abuse.

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